

The Australian

British rioters the spawn of a bankrupt ruling elite

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Cartoon by Peter Nicholson

Source: The Australian

THE riots in London and elsewhere in Britain are a backhanded tribute to the long-term intellectual torpor, moral cowardice, incompetence and careerist opportunism of the British political and intellectual class.

They have somehow managed not to notice what has long been apparent to anyone who has taken a short walk with his eyes open down any frequented British street: that a considerable proportion of the country's young population (a proportion that is declining) is ugly, aggressive, vicious, badly educated, uncouth and criminally inclined.

Unfortunately, while it is totally lacking in self-respect, it is full of self-esteem: that is to say, it believes itself entitled to a high standard of living, and other things, without any effort on its own part.

Consider for a moment the following: although youth unemployment in Britain is very high, that is to say about 20 per cent of those aged under 25, the country has had to import young foreign labour for a long time, even for unskilled work in the service sector.

The reasons for this seeming paradox are obvious to anyone who knows young Britons as I do.

No sensible employer in a service industry would choose a young Briton if he could have a young Pole; the young Pole is not only likely to have a good work ethic and refined manners, he is likely to be able to add up and -- most humiliating of all -- to speak better English than the Briton, at least if by that we mean the standard variety of the language. He may not be more fluent but his English will be more correct and his accent easier to understand.

This is not an exaggeration. After compulsory education (or perhaps I should say intermittent attendance at school) up to the age of 16 costing \$80,000 a head, about one-quarter of British children cannot read with facility or do simple arithmetic. It makes you proud to be a British taxpayer.

I think I can say with a fair degree of certainty, from my experience as a doctor in one of the areas in which a police station has just been burned down, that half of those rioting would reply to the question, "Can you do arithmetic?" by answering, "What is arithmetic?"

British youth leads the Western world in almost all aspects of social pathology, from teenage pregnancy to drug taking, from drunkenness to violent criminality. There is no form of bad behaviour that our version of the welfare state has not sought out and subsidised.

British children are much likelier to have a television in their bedroom than a father living at home. One-third of them never eat a meal at a table with another member of their household -- family is not the word for the social arrangements of the people in the areas from which the rioters mainly come. They are therefore radically unsocialised and deeply egotistical, viewing relations with other human beings in the same way as Lenin: Who whom, who does what to whom. By the time they grow up, they are destined not only for unemployment but unemployability.

For young women in much of Britain, dependence does not mean dependence on the government: that, for them, is independence. Dependence means any kind of reliance on the men who have impregnated them who, of course, regard their own subventions from the state as pocket money, to be supplemented by a little light trafficking. (According to his brother, Mark Duggan, the man whose death at the hands of the probably incompetent police allegedly sparked the riots, "was involved in things", which things being delicately left to the imagination of his interlocutor.)

Relatively poor as the rioting sector of society is, it nevertheless possesses all the electronic equipment necessary for the prosecution of the main business of life; that is to say, entertainment by popular culture. And what a culture British popular culture is!

Perhaps Amy Winehouse was its finest flower and its truest representative in her militant and ideological vulgarity, her stupid taste, her vile personal conduct and preposterous self-pity.

Her sordid life was a long bath in vomitus, literal and metaphorical, for which the exercise of her very minor talent was no excuse or explanation. Yet not a peep of dissent from our intellectual class was heard after her near canonisation after her death, that class having long had the backbone of a mollusc.

Criminality is scarcely repressed any more in Britain. The last lord chief justice but two thought that burglary was a minor offence, not worthy of imprisonment, and the next chief justice agreed with him.

By the age of 12, an ordinary slum-dweller has learned he has nothing to fear from the law and the only people to fear are those who are stronger or more ruthless than he.

Punishments are derisory; the police are simultaneously bullying but ineffectual and incompetent, increasingly dressed in paraphernalia that makes them look more like the occupiers of Afghanistan than the force imagined by Robert Peel. The people who most fear our police are the innocent.

Of course, none of this reduces the personal responsibility of the rioters. But the riots are a manifestation of a society in full decomposition, of a people with neither leaders nor followers but composed only of egotists.

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